

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 NEW DE 14939 222320Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02
SS-15 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01
USIA-06 PRS-01 /075 W
-----107411 222323Z /64/43

R 210755Z OCT 77
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6865
INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
USLO PEKING
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 14939

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - T E X T (P A R A 3 . & 6 .)

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: IN, UR
SUBJECT: THE DESAI VISIT TO MOSCOW

REF: (A) MOSCOW 15252 (NOTAL) (B) NEW DELHI 6597

SUMMARY: BOTH INDIAN AND SOVIET OFFICIALS HERE ARE BILLING
THE VISIT OF PRIME MINISTER DESAI TO MOSCOW AS A GOOD WILL
VISIT AND ARE DOWNPLAYING SPECIFIC SUBJECTS TO BE DISCUSSED.
FOREIGN MINISTER VAJPAYEE HAS CALLED RELATIONS WITH THE
USSR "VERY, VERY FRIENDLY" AND PROBLEM FREE. THE RUPEE-RUBLE
AGREEMENT IS NOT EXPECTED TO COME UP. THE PRIME MINISTER'S
PRINCIPAL SECRETARY ASKED US FOR US VIEWS OF A NUMBER OF IN-
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 NEW DE 14939 222320Z

TERNATIONAL TOPICS LIKELY TO BE DISCUSSED IN THE MOSCOW TALKS.
WE THINK THE INDIANS SEE THE DESAI TRIP AS SERVING TO DEMON-
STRATE THAT INDIA WANTS GOOD BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH THE USSR
BUT NOT A RETURN TO THE "SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP" WHICH CHARAC-
TERIZED RELATIONS UNDER MRS. GANDHI. END SUMMARY

1. BOTH INDIAN AND SOVIET OFFICIALS IN DELHI ARE BILLING THE

VISIT OF PRIME MINISTER DESAI TO THE USSR OCTOBER 21-26 AS A GOOD WILL TRIP. SETTING THE TONE OF THE GOI COMMENT, FOREIGN MINISTER VAJPAYEE IN A PRESS CONFERENCE OCTOBER 15 SAID THAT INDO-SOVIET RELATIONS WERE "VERY, VERY FRIENDLY" AND THAT THERE WERE NO DISPUTES BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. EVEN THE PERENNIAL RUPEE-RUBLE QUESTION, HE SAID, HAS "ALMOST BEEN RESOLVED." THUS THE LEADERS WOULD CONCENTRATE ON DISCUSSING BILATERAL MATTERS SUCH AS DIVERSIFICATION OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND EXCHANGING VIEWS ON THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION. A FEW DAYS EARLIER, VAJPAYEE HAD ALSO SAID THAT THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE MOSCOW VISIT AND PRESIDENT CARTER'S VISIT TO DELHI "LENT STRENGTH TO THE FEELING THAT INDIA HAS REGAINED ITS TRULY NON-ALIGNED IMAGE IN WORLD AFFAIRS."

2. MEA OFFICIALS HAVE ECHOED THESE GENERALIZATIONS, NOTING THAT THERE ARE FEWER BILATERAL ECONOMIC ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED (THE USUAL STUFF ON THE AGENDA AT SUCH SUMMIT) AND THAT INDO-SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN TRADITIONAL FIELDS OF COOPERATION SUCH AS STEEL AND ELECTRICAL POWER GENERATION HAVE IN FACT DECREASED. ON THE LARGER ISSUES, THE MEA HAS SAID THAT THE TALKS WOULD ENCOMPASS THE USUAL TOUR D'HORIZON INCLUDING THE INDIAN OCEAN, SALT AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL TOPICS. THEY DID NOT EXPECT THAT THE ASIAN COLLECTIVE SECURITY PROPOSAL OR INDO-SOVIET COOPERATION IN NUCLEAR MATTERS WOULD RECEIVE ATTENTION. ON PROBABLE SOVIET INTEREST IN THE CURRENT STATUS
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 NEW DE 14939 222320Z

OF SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS, MEA OFFICIALS HAVE SAID THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD REVIEW THE CURRENT SITUATION AND REITERATE THE INDIAN VIEW THAT IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH THE PRC WOULD NOT BE AT THE EXPENSE OF TIES TO THIRD COUNTRIES, I.E., THE SOVIETS.

3. A SOVIET DIPLOMAT STRESSED THE PERSONAL ASPECT OF THE VISIT: THE IMPORTANCE OF AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AMONG THE LEADERS IN STRENGTHENING BILATERAL TIES. HE ALSO SAID THAT THE RUPEE-RUBLE AGREEMENT WOULD NOT BE AT ISSUE, BUT HE WAS LESS OPTIMISTIC THAN THE FOREIGN MINISTER ABOUT HOW CLOSE THE TWO SIDES WERE TO SETTLING THE ISSUE. ALTHOUGH NOT SPECIFIC ON THE SUBJECT MATTER, HE SAID THAT THE ADVANCE TEAM WHICH FOREIGN SECRETARY MEHTA LED TO MOSCOW OCTOBER 18, WOULD BE NEGOTIATING SOMETHING TO BE SIGNED DURING THE VISIT. IN ADDITION TO MEA OFFICIALS, MEHTA WAS ACCOMPANIED BY MANTOSH SONDHI, SECRETARY FOR STEEL, AND LAVRAJ KUMAR, ADVISOR IN THE PLANNING COMMISSION, BUT SURPRISINGLY NO FINANCE MINISTRY OFFICIALS. MANMOHAN SINGH, FINANCE SECRETARY, WHO THOUGHT HE WOULD ACCOMPANY THE PRIME MINISTER, LEARNED ONLY THIS WEEK THAT HE WOULD NOT BE NEEDED. SONDHI'S PRESENCE HAS ENCOURAGED SPECULATION THAT FURTHER COOPERATION IN THE STEEL INDUSTRY

WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN MOSCOW.

4. THERE ARE SEVERAL INDICATIONS THAT THE INDIAN SIDE WILL BE PREPARED TO REVIEW INDO-US RELATIONS IN SOME DETAIL. THE FINANCE MINISTRY JOINT SECRETARY TOLD US THAT HE HAD PREPARED THE ECONOMIC PART OF A GENERAL BRIEFING ON INDO-US RELATIONS FOR THE TRIP AND COMMENTED THAT HE WAS SURPRISED THE PRIME MINISTER HAD WANTED SO DETAILED A REVIEW. ADDITIONALLY, V. SHANKAR, THE PRINCIPAL SECRETARY TO THE PRIME MINISTER WHO WILL ACCOMPANY HIM TO MOSCOW, CALLED ON THE AMBASSADOR OCTOBER 20 TO OBTAIN US VIEWS ON A NUMBER OF SUBJECTS WHICH MIGHT ARISE DURING THE MOSCOW TALKS. THE AMBASSADOR PROVIDED HIM WITH MATERIAL ON THE MIDDLE EAST, INDIAN OCEAN, SALT, COMPREHENSIVE TEST BAN NEGOTIATIONS AND CSCE, MOST OF WHICH CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 NEW DE 14939 222320Z

HAD ALREADY BEEN PASSED TO MEA OFFICIALS PURSUANT TO DEPARTMENT INSTRUCTIONS.

5. SHANKAR SAID THAT THE GOI HAD RECEIVED A CABLE FROM MEHTA REPORTING THAT THE SOVIETS WERE "KEYED UP" FOR THE VISIT. SHANKAR INTERPRETED THIS AS SOVIET ANXIETY DUE TO THE FACT THAT THEY WERE NOT SURE JUST WHERE THEY STOOD WITH THE INDIANS NOW. SHANKAR VOLUNTEERED THE VIEW THAT SOUTHERN AFRICAN PROBLEMS WERE UNLIKELY TO COME UP IN THE TALKS, BECAUSE HE FELT THE SOVIETS WERE AT THIS POINT HOLDING ONLY A WATCHING BRIEF ON SOUTHERN AFRICA. DISCUSSING HUMAN RIGHTS, SHANKAR SAID THAT HE WOULD ADVISE DESAI TO STRESS TO THE SOVIETS THE IMPORTANCE OF ALLOWING POLITICAL DISSIDENTS TO LEAVE THE SOVIET UNION AND THE DESIREABILITY OF AVOIDING ANY RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN ITS EMIGRATION POLICY. IN A SOMEWHAT PUZZLING ASIDE, SHANKAR SAID THAT DESAI HAD NOT YET DEFINED HIS POSITION ON HUMAN RIGHTS VISA-A-VIS THE SOVIETS OR ON THE AGENDA FOR THE TALKS.

6. COMMENT: WE THINK THAT THE INDIANS SEE THE DESAI TRIP AS SERVING THE SAME PURPOSES AS THE GROMYKO VISIT TO DELHI IN APRIL: THE LET BYGONES BE BYGONES IN REGARD TO THE MUTUAL ACrimONY OF THE INDIAN ELECTION PERIOD; TO DEMONSTRATE THAT INDIA HAS SUBSTANTIAL BILATERAL AND INTERNATIONAL REASONS FOR WANTING GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE USSR; AND TO MAKE CLEAR AT THE SAME TIME THAT GOOD RELATIONS FOR THE "TRULLY NON-ALIGNED" JANATA GOVERNMENT DO NOT ENCOMPASS A SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE SOVIET UNION SUCH AS OBTAINED UNDER MRS. GANDHI.
GOHEEN

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CHIEF OF STATE VISITS, MINISTERIAL VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 21-Oct-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977NEWDE14939
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770393-0554
Format: TEL
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19771034/aaaabchj.tel
Line Count: 166
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: d4b69c29-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 MOSCOW 15252, 77 NEW DELHI 6597
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 831426
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: THE DESAI VISIT TO MOSCOW
TAGS: PDEV, OVIP, IN, UR, (DESAI, MORARJI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d4b69c29-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009